

Congressman Childers Works to Ensure Rural Communities Get their Fair Share of Stimulus Funds

January 9, 2009

Washington, DC - Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) joined a group of his colleagues today in urging leadership to support provisions in the upcoming stimulus package that ensure rural communities receive their fair share of federal funds. Along with 32 other Members, the Congressman sent a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi highlighting the need for rural communities in rebuilding our national economy and creating new jobs.

"Consideration of rural projects is of especial importance to North Mississippi," said Congressman Childers. "As the majority of First District counties are rural, projects in these communities will have a significantly large impact on, and are essential to, stimulating Mississippi's economy. Provisions to make sure these communities receive funding will help guarantee that North Mississippi's needs are not overlooked. I am proud to join with my colleagues to help give the First District its fair share."

According to the USDA, Mississippi has more than \$7 million worth of rural water and wastewater projects alone that are shovel ready for implementation. Nearly \$6 million in additional rural water and wastewater projects are already in the pipeline.

The text of the letter is as follows:

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As Congress continues to craft an economic stimulus package, it is critical that the benefits of any stimulus are broadly distributed throughout rural, urban, and suburban America. Approximately 50 million Americans live in rural communities. An economic stimulus package must recognize that rural Americans make vital contributions to our economy and face the same

struggles with rising unemployment as people living in urban and suburban communities. In fact, seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for non-metropolitan areas were higher each quarter in 2008 than for metropolitan areas. We urge you to support provisions in an economic stimulus package to ensure that rural communities receive their fair share of federal funds.

We strongly support your continued efforts to include infrastructure spending in a recovery package. However, legislation with infrastructure spending that ultimately only funds projects in urban and suburban communities will fail to provide the broad economic benefit the American people expect. Facing rising unemployment, rural America cannot afford to be shortchanged in an economic recovery package. As representatives of rural districts, we know that rural communities are prepared with ready-to-go infrastructure projects that could put people to work within months. Rural communities have the workforce and the infrastructure needs to effectively utilize new federal spending. Rural areas should be provided with an equitable share of economic stimulus funds to improve their local economies just like metropolitan communities.

The Job Creation and Unemployment Relief Act of 2008, H.R. 7110, included a provision to distribute stimulus funds between rural and metropolitan communities. Funds in the Federal Transit Administration Transit Capital Assistance Grants were specifically reserved for rural formula grants. Congress should build on the precedent created by the transit funds in the Job Creation and Unemployment Relief Act with guarantees in new economic recovery legislation to ensure an equitable distribution of all infrastructure funds between rural and metropolitan areas.

We look forward to working with you to improve our nation's economy and strengthen rural America through the economic recovery package. Thank you for your continued leadership during this economic crisis.

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